

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 /026 W

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P R 131430Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

TO SECSTATE WASH DC 0413 PRIORITY

INFO USINT CAIRO

S E C R E T TRIPOLI 1044

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR MASS BBAK MARR LY US

SUBJECT: LIBYAN INTEREST IN U.S. RADAR

REF: STATE 157775

SUMMARY: SEEMS TO ME THIS IS NOT THE TIME TO APPROVE ANY SALE OF MAJOR NEW MILITARY EQUIPMENT TO THE ALRG -- UNLESS THE US GETS SOMETHING IN RETURN THEREFOR BESIDES CASH. SUCH A JUDGMENT RESTS OF COURSE ON A BROAD APPRAISAL OF US/LIBYAN POLITICAL RELATIONS.

1. THE PRDOMINANT POLITICAL ATTITUDE OF THE LARG TO THE USG HAS ALWAYS BEEN ONE OF EXTREME SUSPICION AND DEFENSIVE HOSTILITY. LIBYANS ARE NATURALLY XENOPHOBIC PEOPLE AND THE US AS A GREAT POWER WITH HIGH PROFILE HERE CAME IN FOR A LEAST ITS SHARE OF THE DISTRUST OF SOREIGNERS. MORE IMPORTANTLY, THE RCC HAS SUPERIMPOSED ON THIS NATIVE XENOPHOBIA THE DISCIPLINES OF A POLICE STATE AND PROPAGATED A DOCTRINAIRE HATRED OF THE USG -- PARTLY BECAUSE OF ITS SUPPORT OF ISRAEL AND PARTLY AS A SECURITY MEASURE. QADHAFI IN PARTICULAR HAS LED THE PACK WITH HIS INACCURATE ALLEGATIONS AND FANATIC POSTURINGS, NO DOUBT TO SATISFY SOME INNER URGING TO TAKE ON THE WORLD SINGLE-HANDEDLY. HE HAS A FACT ACHIEVED A REMARKABLE STRING OF "SUCCESSES" FROM A LIBYAN

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NATIONALIST VIEWPOINT, OFTEN BUT NOT EXCLUSIVELY

AT THE EXPENSE OF THE U.S. HIS THREAT TO US LIES
NOT ONLY HIS HOSTILITY BUT HIS ILLUSION THAT HE IS
ON THE ROAD TO OMNIPOTENCE.

2. IN REACTION TO ALL THIS THE USG HAS TAKEN AN
ESSENTIALLY CORRECT STANCE, I BELIEVE, BY SPEAKING
UP FOR ITS RIGHTS YET AVOIDING UNNECESSARY PROVOCATION.
MQHIS LATTER PROVISO STEMMED FOR THE MOST PART
FROM OUR OIL INTERESTS AND THE RELATED AMERICAN
PRESENCE HERE. IT IS, HOWEVER, A CONSIDERATION
THAT IS DWINDLING, EITHER IN TERMS OF INVESTMENTS
TO PROTECT OR AMERICAN TO ASSIST. NOW THAT OXY
HAS ACCEPTED 51 PER CENT NATIONALIZATION, A DOMINO
EFFECT WILL SET IN. HOW MUCH SHOULD WE CONTINSE TO
STRESS AVOIDANCE OF CONFRONTATION WITH THE LARG,
ESPECIALLY IN THE AREA OF MILITARY SUPPLY WHICH IS
PROPERLY CONTINGENO ON POLITICAL RELATIONS?

3. AS THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL FOR OUR OIL
COMPANIES BECAME INCREASINGLY CLEAR, THIS POST BECAME
INCREASINGLY IMPATIENT TO BE ABLE TO TELL THE LARG
"NO" ON ITS RECURRENT REQUESTS FOR MILITARY SUPPLY
ITEMS. FOR OVER TWO YEARS I HAVE ADVOCATED "NO" AS
A BETTER ANSWER TO THE ADDITIONAL F-5'S THAN "NO DECISION".
FOR OVER A YEAR THE POET HAS PREFERRED TO SAY "NO"
PROMPTLY ON THE ADDITIONAL C-130'S. MONTHS AGO I
SUGGESTED WE TERMINATE THE OFFICIAL FMS PROGRAM. ALL
OF THESE NEGATIVES WOULD BE APPROPRIATE RESPONSES
TO QADHAFI'S MOUNTING CHALLENGES TO THE USG; IN THEIR
ABSENCE HE SUFFERS FROM THE ILLUSION HE CAN ATTACK
THE U.S. POLITICALLY AND ECONOMICALLY BUT STILL PERHAPS
GET WHAT HE WANTS IN THE MILITARY AREA.

4. THE CASE AT HAND PRESENTS YET ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY
TO EDUCATE QADHAFI AND COMPANY RE THE INTERDEPENDENCE
OF MILITARY AND POLITICO/ECONOMIC RELATIONS. WE ARE
AWARE OF THE COMMERCIAL AND BALANCE OF PAYMENTS
ADVANTAGES OF THE PAGE AND ITT RADAR PROPOSALS. NO
DOUBT THE LARG IS COUNOING ON THESE CONSIDERATIONS
TO SWAY US, AS IT DOES NEARLY ALL COUNTRIES. ONE
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COULD ALSO ARGUE THAT LARG DEPENDENCE ON US IN
THIS AREA, AS IN CIVIL AVIATION, COULD EVENOUALLY
GIVE US SOME OTHER ADVANTAGES OR LEVERAGE,
PARTICULARLY IF 2,000 LIBYANS NEED TO BE TRAINED ON
RADAR IN THE STATES. BUT SET AGAINST THESE THOUGHTS,
SOME OF THEM IFFY, WE SHOULD CONFIDER ABOVE ALL THE
SIGNAL THAT WE WOULD SEND QADHAFI IF WE AGREE TO
SELL WITHOUT CONDITIONS: A) HE CAN PRETTY MUCH DO

WHAT HE PLEASES WITH AMERICAN OIL COMPANIES AND THE AMERICANS WILL TRY TO MAKE MONEY ELSEWHERE. B) HE WAS RIGHT IN ASSUMING HE COULD ATTACK THE USG POLITICALLY AND YET ACQUIRE ANY AMERICAN EXPETISE AND GADGETRY HE WANTS. C) HE CAN GET AMERICAN RADAR SO HE CAN BETTER ENFORCE HIS ILLEGAT CLAIM TO CONTROL AIRSPACE OVER HHE MEDITERRANEAN AND, PROBABLY, SHOOT AT ANY UNIDENTIFIED BLIP WITHIN RANGE. B) HE CAN DO ALL THIS WHILE STARVING THE AMERICAN EMBASSY IN TRIPOLI AND OTHERWISE CONTINUING TO INSIST ON A PASSPORT POLICY NOT BASED ON RECIPROCITY.

5. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT, AT THE MINIMUM, AN FAVORABLE ACTION ON THE RADAR PROPOSAL SHOULD BE CONTINGENT ONA DRAWING IN OF QADHAFI'S HORNS ON ITEMF C AND D. IT IS PRESUMABLY PREMATURE TO DISCUSS HOW WE MIGHT ATTEMPT TO ACCOMPLISH THESE TWO PURPOSES, PARTICULARLY NOW IN VIEW OF QADHAFI'S ELEVENTH HOUR BRINKSMANSHIP RE UNION WITH EGYPT. HOWEVER, THE DEPT MAY BE ASSURED THAT THIS POST WOULD BE DELIGHTED TO BEAR THE MESSAGE TO THE LARG THAT THEY CAN ONLY GET AMERICAN RADAR IF THEY MEND THEIR WAYS BOTH OVER THE MEDITERRANEAN AND IN TRIPOLI.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, RADAR, AIR DEFENSE, TRACKING STATIONS, MILITARY SALES, ARMS EXPORT LICENSES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 AUG 1973
Decapton Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decapton Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: elyme
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973TRIPOL01044
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: P750011-0001, P750008-2551
From: TRIPOLI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730840/aaaabdew.tel
Line Count: 139
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 73 STATE 157775
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: elyme
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 DEC 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <10-Dec-2001 by martinml>; APPROVED <16-Jan-2002 by elyme>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LY INTEREST IN US RADAR
TAGS: MASS, BBAK, MARR, LY, US
To: n/a
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005